



AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the Title with the following Title:

--ACCESSING ONE OR MORE SERVICES FROM ONE OR MORE SERVICE PROVIDERS--

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Please replace the Abstract with the following Abstract:

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--A server system provides a client system with access to a number of services. For each service, if a given service provider is overloaded or if the client is unable to contact that provider, the client can contact another service provider capable of providing the requested service. The server system provides information to the client system identifying a list of services that the server system provides. For each service in the list of services, the information may include a service name identifying the service, and a unique port identifying each service provider for that service, so that one service name can be used in accessing multiple service providers of a desired service. A request from the client may include a service name identifying the desired service, and a port selected from ports provided by the server system that corresponds to a service provider for the desired service.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 2 at line 7 with the following paragraph:

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--The present invention pertains to the field of client-server computer networking. More particularly, the present invention relates to a method of accessing one or more services from one or more service providers.--

Please insert the following paragraph after the paragraph beginning on page 4 at line 4:

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--An ISP may include numerous physical or logical devices, each device (i.e., service provider) potentially capable of providing several services. Likewise, each service (e.g., email) may be performed by several devices. Often, when an ISP receives a request for a service, the request is directed to a device that is already quite overloaded while another device perfectly capable of processing the request stands relatively idle. Therefore, what is needed is a way to improve the balancing of workloads among the various devices of the ISP.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 5 at line 1 with the following paragraphs:

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--According to the present invention, a server system provides a client system with access to a number of services. As discussed above, the prior art client-server system suffers in that some devices in the server system are quite busy while other devices are much less busy. In processing a request for a service, the request often waits to be processed by an overloaded device instead of being processed relatively quickly by a less busy device. In the present invention, for a given service, the workload of each device providing that service may be more fully balanced by dynamically changing which device (i.e., service provider) provides the service. For each service, if a given service provider is overloaded or if the client is unable to contact that provider, the client can contact any other of the service providers capable of providing the requested service.--

--In operation, the server system provides information to the client system identifying a list of services that the server system provides. This information may be provided at any time, such as after the client system logs into the server system. For each service in the list of services, the information may include a service name identifying the service, and at least one unique port identifying each service provider for that service so that one service name can be used in accessing the multiple service providers that provide the desired service.--

--Ultimately, the client system constructs a request for a service based on the information provided by the client system. The request may include a service name identifying the desired service provided by the server system and at least one port corresponding to a service provider that provides the desired service, the port being selected from the ports provided by the server system.--

--For purposes of describing the unique load balancing features of this invention, assume, for example, that the server system provides an email service designated by the service name "WTV-mailto." A client system can access any provider of this email service using the same URL (uniform resource locator) such as the service name. The client system merely chooses an appropriate port number from the list of port numbers provided by the server system to distinguish between service providers. If the client is unable to contact the corresponding service provider in the server system, the client tries the next service provider in the server system, using the next port number provided by the server system. Thus, load balancing of the service providers is accomplished for each service offered by the server system.--

--Other features of the present invention will be apparent from the accompanying drawings and from the detailed descriptions which follows.--
